15: Benedict--389 L-5 (no date) 1947 Laotians

116, 171, 178

"The present-day position of Lao is to be contrasted with that of Khmer. The Lao of French Indochina are simply an eastern extension of the much larger Lao group within Siam itself, the Mekong river being a political rather than ethnic or cultural boundary. Siamese, although spoken only in central and southern Siam, has a dominant cultural position and is gradually encroaching on the Lao-speaking areas of northern and eastern Siam. With further political growth in Siam, coupled perhaps with a Pan-Thai movement, we may look forward to further extension of Siamese at the expense of Lao, Shan, and lesser Thai speeches. If the Mekong river boundary is maintained, however, the Lao of French Indochina (Laos) may be sufficiently buffered to stand up under these linguistic influences. In any event it is apparent that Thai speech, whether Lao, Siamese or some newly evolved dialectical variant, will long continue to play a leading role in this part of Indochina."

648* edition), Paris, 1911./, p. 9
175*

654 /439/ the name French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which placed a first shipment of fifteen tons of merchandise at the expedition's disposal.

Pavie set sail again on November 17 for /293/ Bangkok, where he stayed for only two weeks, just long enough to make contact again with our representative in Siam and to reopen negotiations with the Siamese foreign minister, who was specially appointed for the purpose by King Chulalongkorn.

On January 23, 1890 he reached Hanoi and rejoined his old and his new companions (including, among the latter, the embassy attache Lefevre-Pontalis, the vice-consul Lugan, the trader Macey, Professor Cunillon, the Postal Commissioner de Coulgeans, the naturalist Le Dantec and the officers Riviere, Friquegnon, de Malglaive, Dugast and Cogniard). He divided them into several groups of operators who scattered on February 3 throughout Tran-Ninh, Cammon and the region of Stung-Treng, while he himself set out for Luang-Prabang with a last group of "fervent disciples," where he arranged to meet all the members of the mission six months later so that they could coordinate their first labors over the winter months.

Duly provided, through the intermediary of Governor General Piquet, with the authority of the king of Cambodia and that of the emperor of Annam for settling questions of frontier delimitation, and with a passport from the Chinese government /294/ which would eventually allow him to explore the Yunnanese frontiers, he first /624/ went to Muong-Lai where Deo-van-Tri was waiting for him. Faithful to his promise, now that all his brothers had all been freed Cam-Sinh's son awaited his arrival so that he could offer himself to the French authorities, "placing all his pride in giving himself up to that man who had restored calm to his land" (1).

1. Cf. Mission Pavie, "Geographie et Voyages," Vol. II, p. 12.

Pavie had an enchanted voyage. Although the magnificent valley of the Black River no longer held for him the powerful attraction of the unknown, still he felt a profound joy as he daily noted the changes for the better which had occurred since his last trip among /727/ these peoples. "The influence of Pennequin (who had accompanied /178/ him with Vacle and Lefevre-Pontalis) was there, clearly marked at each step... no more Flags in the well-known colors, all had

643* Indeed King Zakarine, no matter what his attitude of detachment
648* towards power, was noteworthy for his simplicity, his good sense and
175* his ability to see /323/ the usefulness of certain reforms. For he was
/178/ very poorly seconded by the mandarins of the kingdom council (Senam),
/646/ who were "incompetent men and scoffers dominated by their immediate and individual interests" (1). On the whole, however, the

1. Cf. ibid., p. 78.

642 political and social organization which we found was a good one,
178 and we acted wisely in preserving all the mechanisms of the native administration and in respecting the traditions, customs and mores of the populations throughout all of Laos, insofar as they were compatible with our own institutions (2). This was all the more easy for

2. Thus we were led to suppress radically the slave traffic which was enriching a few Siamese, Cambodian, Laotian and Burmese mandarins. Cf. L. de Reinach, op. cit. /Le Laos (Posthumous edition), Paris, 1911./, pp. 230 ff.

us in that all the Laotian muongs (whether or not they were dependencies of Luang-Prabang) had a similar organization which was a smaller model of that of the kingdom (except for the Senam) and
647 was an obvious vestige of the epic times of Fa-Ngoum and the great
642 State of Lan-Xang (3). Like the king, the governors of /324
631

3. The following was, in outline, the political organization of the kingdom of Luang-Prabang in 1894:

/643/* At its head the king, the great master of existences (Somdet-Phra-Chao), and the second king, the great master responsible for the preservation of property (Chao-Maha-Oupahat).

Then came the minister princes: the Ratsavong or first prince and right-hand minister; the Ratsabout or second prince and left-hand minister; and the Komakhoune or third and fourth princes and ministers of the center and of the civil services.

The first three mandarins, who bore the title of Phaya,
/646/ were, in order of importance: 1) the Phaya Muong-Sen or
/693/ first right-hand mandarin, head of the Senam and head of of justice; 2) the Phaya Muong-Tiane or first left-hand

648* Siamese high commission" meeting in Vientiane and presided over
175* by the superior resident in Laos was established to study all questions arising from the application of the new system, including definition and /352/ delimitation of the river frontier; determination of the regime to be applied to the demilitarized zone; eventual modification of the system of leased concessions which had previously been granted to France on the right bank; and elaboration of regulations
/654/ governing the program of public maintenance and improvement works along the Mekong, policing the river, policing navigation, sanitary police, fishing in the river, etc. The carrying out of these extremely liberal provisions, which was begun in all sincerity in January 1928, justifies us in believing that a true entente cordiale has been reached to the greater profit of the two neighboring States.

ACCESSION TO THE THRONE OF H. M. SISAVANG-VONG, KING OF LUANG-PRABANG, 1886. -- KING 1904.

643* King Zakarine died in Luang-Prabang on March 25, 1904 at the
175* age of sixty-three, at the very moment when the agreement which we made with Siam at this time fulfilled his last desires with respect to the integrity of his domains. The heir apparent Sisavang-Vong, who had just finished his studies in Paris, was on the way to Indo-China. He was back in his country's capital in time to attend the cremation ceremonies. /An unpaged photograph is inserted between pp. 352 and 353: "H. M. Sisavang-Vong, king of Luang-Prabang."--Translator/

643* /353/ The Laotians of today. On March 4, 1905 the new
178 sovereign solemnly received his investiture from Superior Resident Mahe acting in behalf of the government of the Republic. Profoundly attached to France, H. M. Sisavang-Vong has for more than a quarter of a century exercised, under our supervision and with the utmost loyalty, his high and benevolent authority over his faithful and trusting people. Thanks to his prestige, and to his great personal activity, and thanks also to the precious help given us by his dignitaries, some of whom have the most enlightened and active comprehension of the civilizing mission which France has set herself in the Far East, the Laotians of the kingdom have wholeheartedly accepted our methods of social renovation and of making their magnificent land productive. They are awaking from the kind of lethargic somnolence into which their historical calamities had plunged them. They have regained the consciousness of their political personality

and, even as they retain their smiling native good nature, they are 643*
becoming increasingly adapted with each passing day to the rude 178
necessities of modern existence in the hectic struggle between
individuals and peoples.

Nearly identical results have been achieved in the other parts of Laos where /354/ the influence of our administrators is exercised in a more direct manner, even though it is still usually based on the ascendancy which the local mandarins have retained over the populace.

Annexation of the territory of Bassac (1905). It was thus that 635
the territory of Bassac on the right bank, which was in full disorder 175*
when it was returned to France, was pacified by the Laotian "governor" whom we appointed there. Annexed in January 1905 to the province of Ban-Mouang, this territory had been abandoned in the previous year by the oupahat Boua-Laphan, who was the successor of King Kham-Souk (1) and who had taken refuge at Ban-Toung-

1. See above, p. 328.

Loung in the Siamese district of Oubone. In a most loyal manner Chao-Nhouy, one of Kham-Souk's sons, offered us his services and took an oath of fidelity before Superior Resident Mahe on October 14, 1905. He was named governor of the region, and since then has not ceased to give the French administration the benefit of his influence and his devotion (2).

2. The "delegation" which replaced the commercial agency in Bassac was discontinued in 1908 and the capital of the circumscription, which took the name of province of Bassac, was transferred from Ban-Mouang to Pakse.

/355/ The Khas of Lower Laos. The Khas of Lower Laos have 563
remained perfectly peaceful ever since their 1901 escapade was 669
suppressed. They have even tended imperceptibly to come out of their fierce isolation as new means of communication have connected their villages, which only yesterday were hidden in the brush, with the vast network of roads now under construction which will soon open up the Laotian hinterland (1).

1. The question of the Indo-Chinese "Moi hinterland"

influence of any foreign propaganda and that their revolt did not at any time assume the character of an anti-French manifestation. Thus their uprising had no repercussions on the other ethnic groups in Laos, which in spirit and in deed stood behind our repressive measures. L M 563 669

They returned in peace to their agricultural labors (chiefly the cultivation of poppies) in their precipitous solitudes. A special administrative statute gave them the cantonal and communal autonomy which they desired, with no Laotian or Annamite intermediary. No matter how infrequent their contacts with the populations of the valleys and plains, it is quite certain that racial antagonism (exploited by agitators during the revolt) was maintaining a state of mind among their groupings which was suspicious and devoid of friendliness towards the native authorities. The reforms which were put into effect seem to have yielded good results. In the same way, a prudent policy towards the still unsubdued tribes of Lower Laos, one which will avoid direct conflict with their customs /362/ and prejudices, will gradually tame these last representatives of another age whom the opening-up of means of communication will finally incorporate into the larger Indo-Chinese family. L M 563 636 609 178 563

/ Pages 363-367 contain a Bibliography. Page 368 is blank. Pages 369-375 contain an Alphabetical Index of Names Mentioned. Page 376 is blank. --Translator/ 000

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To dream of a woman and be awakened by the dream.
To covet the property of others.
To speak profanely of earth, wind, fire, water or anything whatsoever.

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Ordained bonzes, like novices and students, shave their heads, eyebrows and beards carefully and repeat this operation every two weeks. Their clothing, which is the same for all and is of a uniform yellow color obtained by means of a jackwood dye, consists of a sarong, a kind of very full skirt which is worn folded in pleats and extends from the waist to the ground, and which is held in at the waist by a narrow sash. A half-tunic passing under one arm is attached to the opposite shoulder, and is split on one side. The whole garment is kept in place by a sash worn crosswise, and is covered with a kind of toga in the antique manner which is severely draped.

Ordained bonzes wear in addition a piece of pleated cloth on the left shoulder on which sacred characters and various formulas are inscribed.

Bonzes obey a code which was brought to them from India together with the sacred books, and a part of which has been quoted above.

The code requires that their clothing should not be made of one piece of cloth which is whole and of full width, but that it be made of unmatched pieces sewn together. Since the code does not in any way specify the nature of the cloth, one sees bonzes' garments [164] of silk and velvet as well as of cotton and flannel, depending on the generosity of the donors.

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Failure to keep the vow of chastity is very severely punished. The guilty person is marched through the village or city and seated backwards on a horse or carried on a wattle while a minor functionary proclaims the fault committed aloud and beats on a gong. Children and even adults utter hoots and throw filth at the guilty party and his female accomplice, who follows a few steps behind him. When he gets back to the pagoda the bonze is degraded from his rank and then handed over to the civil authorities if there are any grounds for so doing (1).

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(1) This custom has fallen into disuse. Faults committed by bonzes are treated much more indulgently in Laos than in Cambodia.

149: Reinach--124 G-8 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Although less pure than in Cambodia, the bonzes' morals in Laos are generally fairly good. They are, moreover, greatly loved, highly regarded and fondly cherished. When there is a celebration or a great feast in a family, part of the choicest dishes is always reserved for the bonzes.

On the next to the last day of every phase of the moon, the bonzes must make public confession of their faults and be prepared, should the need arise, to undergo the punishments which the code stipulates.

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Bonzeries are schools and at the same time workshops where all trades are taught. All knowledge is concentrated in them, as our knowledge was during the Middle Ages in monasteries.

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Together with the pagodas, they are also spots of inviolable asylum in accordance with certain rights, and hostelries where travelers are lodged and fed with the produce of the bonzes' alms-seeking.

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Newly ordained bonzes must stay in the pagoda at least three months, and may quit their habit at the end of this period. If a bonze desires to return to the pagoda after he has reentered lay life, his reassumption of the habit gives rise to the same formalities and ceremonies as the first time. It is a new ordination.

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The liturgical litanies of the Buddhist religion, which the bonzes psalmodize, may not be translated into Laotian. The bonzes and the [165] [Illustration] [166] [Blank page] [167] Laotian faithful, as well as the cantors and the French adepts, chant prayers whose meaning they do not understand (1).

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(1) In reality the Laotian, Lu and Youn bonzes form a sort of caste as the Druids used to in Gaul. More particularly, they are the ministers of worship, the repositories of moral authority, of scientific traditions, of secrets and of artistic and industrial methods. They transmit by word of mouth the precepts of Buddhist dogma, which were long ago explained by those who introduced the religion into the land. But the writings in "Pali" which contained these, although they can still be read mechanically by a few scholars, are no longer understood. Thence arises the necessity of handing down their meaning by word alone. Thence also, without doubt, arises the increasingly greater attenuation of the purity and force of these principles as they

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779 pass from one generation to another and suffer partial suppressions
178 and numberless interpolations.
[198] The bonzes of our own day do not know the sacred language
792 and are reduced to imitating the "hateful" monks of whom Rabelais speaks, "who neither till the soil nor work, but only mumble a great stock of legends and psalms which they do not understand at all."

792 The bonzes are the ones who consecrate water and prepare with
641 their prayers for the pronunciation of the oath of allegiance which
788 native officials take twice a year to their direct sovereign and, if necessary, to their suzerain both for themselves and for the whole population. The oath consists in reciting the formula and in drinking lustral water in which the candles used for the ceremony have been extinguished and in which the arms of the sovereign have been dipped.

The following is the formula of the oath which is pronounced in Laos twice a year, in the capital of each province, in the presence of the government commissioner. This formula has been in use in the land for centuries and was left just as it was, except for substituting the title of President of the Republic for that of the king of Siam, Vien-Tiane or Luang-Prabang.

Formula of the oath: "I (there follow the names, titles and qualities of each of the mandarins present, each of whom repeats the formula, which is read aloud by one of them, generally the eldest), take an oath of allegiance and offer my life to the President of the French Republic. I give my word before God and before the angels present in heaven. May God and his angels deign to listen to my vows, because the President of the French Republic governs our land with wisdom and skill, follows the ancient customs and protects the bonzes, the authorities and the inhabitants.

"I place myself under his sacred feet, as well as the soldiers and inhabitants who live in my muong, and we all swear him allegiance.

[168] "I ask to serve the administration in the shadow of his sacred feet and to acknowledge his goodness by promising to be faithful and never to revolt in thought, word or body.

"If I show myself ungrateful to, or if I revolt against the President of the French Republic in thought, word or body; if I see or learn that peril threatens the President of the French Republic and remain silent instead of warning him immediately of the peril which I see or know; if I show myself ungrateful towards the President of the

satisfaction and finds a pleasant test of his abilities in setting words to refrains whose meaning is unknown and in stimulating laughter or pleasant and amusing ideas in his audience, either by vaunting the joys of love and the plastic perfections of the human body, or by recalling [217] useful or pleasant memories, or by honoring justice and goodness. The morals of these folk, who are indolent because they are content with very little and are happy and healthy, and to whom all our subtleties are unknown, permit the greatest license in songs and improvisations and the greatest realism and crudity in the expression of thoughts.

In spite of this, there is not the least unhealthy intention in either the poet or his audience. As we have seen above in connection with burials, children of both sexes attend all these festivities accompanied by their parents. They all take pleasure in the same refrains and laugh at the same funny sayings, not because they are vicious but because they are pure pagans for whom enjoyment and pleasure are like gods. The songs are animated by graceful gestures, and together with the music form a whole which is poetic according to their particular esthetic canons and which is simply a manifestation of art and not an indication of loose morals.

Theater. The Laotians also have a dramatic repertory consisting of longwinded plays, epics, religious and warlike stories, romantic tales, ancient legends, etc. These poems are played by several actors, with an orchestra and supernumeraries, and require many very ornate costumes which have not varied in form since the earliest times. Usually, however, the costumes are mere tinsel.

Like the Cambodian and Siamese theater from which it comes, the Laotian theater interprets age-old works taken from the Vedas, the Ramayana or the Mahabharata. To this repertory are added purely Kmer plays and various adaptations of Burmese origin which are performed in the classical costumes and in which a strong tinge of comedy and modernism and a bit of satire are mingled with the ancient traditions.

Women are excluded from the theater, and the female roles are played by young men. As in the case of songs and improvisations, dramatic knowledge, the repertory of plays and the art of acting are handed down from father to son. The actors are called Lakhone and plays are called Kam-Kong-Lakhone or Kam-Kong [218] Fone-Lakhone if they include dances or ballets. Finally, one last dramatic genre

Cochinchina, and this is quite a lucrative trade.

231 178 The following are the main points in Laos where the raising of oxen would have a good chance of success, in view of the nature of the soil and the forage plants which grow there:

1. Northern Laos. Valleys of the upper Nam-Tha; plain of Muong-Sing; plains of the Mekong and of the Nam-Hou in the province of Luang-Prabang; valleys of the Nam-Het and of the upper Song-Ca; plains of Tran-Ninh (2); plains between the Mekong, the Nam-Tone

[175 727] (2) Tran-Ninh used to be the greatest livestock region in Laos as recently as thirty some years ago, and all the buffalo and oxen needed in nearby regions came from there. The occupation of the region by the Hos and its pitiless depopulation by the Siamese completely halted this form of industry. It is beginning to be reborn with the peace and order which we have brought to this region, and the herds are reforming. Exports have already begun again in the last year.

Livestock is the principal form of wealth of the region, and could yield high profits to a European company which had sufficient capital at its disposition to engage in large-scale breeding. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1900. Report of the Superior Resident on Tran-Ninh.)

and the Nam-Ngum, in the province of Vien-Tiane.

[405] 2. Southern Laos. Plain of Tha-Khek and basin of Mahasay, in the province of Cammon; plains of the Mekong, valleys of the Se-Bang-Hien and of its tributaries in the province of Song-Khone; plains between the Se-Set and the Sedone, valley of the Se-Katam, slope of Pou-Pai-Mai, in the province of Saravane; valleys of the Bla (1), of the Poko and of the Ayoun, in the province of

(1) The raising of oxen might be greatly increased here. In all the villages, especially the Catholic villages, I saw superb herds containing animals with every fine point. If breeding is not more extensive here, this is because the prices offered at Ang-Ke are not greatly higher than those at which the animals are sold in the region, since the Khas use large numbers of them to supplant buffaloes in their superstitious ceremonies. [113] (Bulletin économique de l'Indo-Chine, December 1899. Notes by the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos on the eastern region of Lower Laos.)

231 Attopeu; slopes of the plateau of the Bolovens; plains of the Se-Kampho
178 and of the Se-Pien (2); plains of the upper Sebang-Khan and of the

(2) I have never crossed these great and beautiful plains which stretch as far as the eye can see between these two rivers which have water all year long, intersected here and there by wooded hills whose slopes provide the herds with a refuge and with a guaranteed food supply during the inundation of the lowlands--an inundation lasting three or four months--without regretting that no European colonist has ever thought of taking advantage of this situation. (Report of the Superior Commandant of Lower Laos, April 1897.)

Ia-Drang.

231 The sale prices for buffalo and oxen vary from one point to
435 another and are also subject to fluctuations due to the age, stature, abundance or scarcity of the stock, the law of supply and demand, etc.

In 1899 livestock exports from Lower Laos only were 2,184 oxen valued at 54,600 francs, 362 cows valued at 5,430 francs and 3,144 buffalo valued at 235,800 francs, or a total of 6,690 head with a value of 295,830 francs.

In Lower Laos buffalo sold for from 50 to 112 francs in 1899, and oxen for from 20 to 30 francs. In Upper Laos the prices for [406] buffalo varied from 60 to 110 francs. Oxen may cost more or less there, depending on whether they are trained as draft and pack animals or fattened for export. In the first case they bring from 40 to 70 francs and in the second from 10 to 15 francs.

231 Pigs. Pigs are used mainly for food by the natives, who con-
262 sume a great many. The meat of this animal enjoys great favor among the population, and it is pork which, prepared either alone or with fish, enters most often into the composition of meals. [Illustration here]

[563] The Lus, the Meos, the Chinese and the Khas are past masters at raising pigs, and their stock might figure successfully in our regional competitions. They fatten them in closed compartments, after first castrating them.

231 The most common variety is the one known as "Cochinchinese or Tonkinese pig." It is gray with white spots and sometimes almost black, and bears on its back a mane of long, stiff bristles similar to those of the wild boar. Even when domesticated these pigs have

439 178 [437] The conclusion to be drawn from the preceding tables is not favorable toward orienting Laotian trade towards the ports of French Indo-China. It is evident that the export trend of animals and products shows a marked tendency to move towards Oubone and Siam. Indeed, Siam's share of total exports from Lower Laos (merchandise and animals), which was 179,627 francs in 1898, rose to 381,185 francs in 1899. This was an increase of more than double.

On the other hand, we see that the share of Annam, Cochinchina and Cambodia in this same traffic, which was 699,712 francs in 1898, fell to 466,477 francs in 1899, representing an approximate decrease of one-third.

[496] The causes of this persistent and increasing orientation of Laotian trade towards Siam are perhaps to be sought in the opening of the railroad from Bangkok to Korat (1) as well as in the customs system of

(1) The king of Siam inaugurated this line on December 21, 1900.

French Indo-China.

439 497 505 There is no question but that the railroad constitutes a considerable improvement over the old means of transport, as much by virtue of the lower costs and shorter travel time as by the suppression of the dangers and bothers of the cart road from Korat to Bangkok (domestic duties, exactions of the local authorities, robberies, etc.). But are these reasons sufficient to explain or justify the admitted fact?

The River Merchant Fleet [Messageries fluviales] service is, as we have previously noted, the most rapid and least expensive means of transporting merchandise from Luang-Prabang to Saigon. Why then is this service, which is superior even in its present imperfection, scorned by exporters in general and used mainly by importers for products destined for the Europeans in Laos? The answer is a simple one. Exporters would not hesitate to use the Mekong route and to transport their products to Pnom-Penh or to Saigon-Cholon if, as they can do at Moulmein, at Xieng-Mai, at Nong-Khay, at Bassac, at Oubone, at Korat and at Bangkok, they could obtain [438] supplies there of imported merchandise from various sources to make up the counterpart of their exports. But, besides the fact that they would not be able to find certain special merchandise which is indispensable to them in the French marketplaces, they could not obtain the rest except at an increase of fifty or sixty percent or even more over the ordinary prices in the markets of Siam and Burma which we have just cited.

505 Large quantities of nep (rice suitable
438 for making alcohol), hides, horn, cardamom, wax, benzoin, various gums, etc. were shipped from Bassac, from Pakse, from Savannakhet, from Vien-Tiane and from other Laotian centers which had formerly traded exclusively with Bangkok by way of the Nongkay-Outaradit route on the Menam and by the Korat route on the Se-Moun.

505 "Passenger traffic, which was almost nil when the new services
484 were established, is increasing every day. The natives are beginning to become familiar with this rapid, convenient and inexpensive manner of traveling which the steamship represents and they are making more frequent use thereof, a fact which can only contribute to the broadening of relations between the various posts scattered along the great river and increase trade in their products of all kinds" (1).

(1) See, in Appendix XXX, the transport rates between France and Indo-China and between Saigon and Laos.

[487] [Illustration at top of page]

CHAPTER XI
1. SOCIAL STATUS. SLAVERY

[565] Upon our arrival in Laos, we found a hierarchial society com-
567 prised of nobles, commoners and slaves. We could not do better than to preserve all features of the political, social and administrative
• 178 organization just as it had been. In this respect we took our inspira-
177 tion from our predecessors the Siamese, leaving our new subjects the utmost liberty and respecting their traditions, customs and mores insofar as these were compatible with our own institutions.

Thus we were at times forced to recall certain native officials who had compromised themselves with the Siamese, or who through their exactions had made themselves unworthy of their office. Moreover, we have always acted tactfully and mildly, [488] leaving the choice of officials to election, in accordance with custom.

But above all, we took radical measures by completely suppressing the slave trade and by regularizing a very mild form of slavery for debt.

[556] There used to be slavery in Laos, as in Siam, in the form of slavery by capture, by purchase and for debt. It yielded high profits for those who engaged in the traffic, for the children and grandchildren of slaves were slaves themselves at birth, a fact which increased the fortunes of their masters to that extent.

567 as early as March of 1896, in a report which we believe it will be of
426 value to reproduce in part, as well as a code of rules as ingenious as they were just governing slavery for debt (1).

(1) See Appendix XXVIII.

567 Finally, there is a kind of serfdom in Laos which is applied to
563 certain Kha tribes. Thus in the kingdom of Luang-Prabang, subsequent to revolts, entire tribes of Khas were reduced to a state of serfdom and placed under the patronage of the king, of princes, or of the principal members of the nobility. In 1894 our administration undertook to liberate these Khas, who are completely free today. In southern Laos most of these latter are still the clients of a few nobles or Laotian officials, but the guardianship is a gentle one which they can abandon and resume at will.

2. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

178 Under our control, as has been noted above, the political
642 organization of Laos has remained what it was before 1893. We have respected the customs and local traditions, and we govern through the native administration in which all the machinery has been retained.

643 [490] The following is a nearly complete list of all the officials in a large Muong such as the kingdom of Luang-Prabang or of Bassac (1)

(1) The kingdom of Luang-Prabang is situated on both banks of the Mekong, but the king resides on the left bank at Luang-Prabang and is consequently dependent on the French authorities. The kingdom of Bassac is today wholly on the right bank, and the king of Bassac falls under Siamese domination. The title of king is sometimes given also to the "Tiao-Fa" or head of the province of Muong-Sing. The head of a muong in the Sib-Song-Pahn-Na may be a "Tso-boua," a "Phya-Hua" or a "Sen-Houi-Fa," depending on his importance.

At the head are the Kings, two in number:

Somdet-Phra-Tiao or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Louang, first king, great master of existences.

644 Tiao-Maha-Oupahat or Tiao-Tsi-Vite-Vang-Na, second king, great master responsible for conservation of property. [Illustration here]

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Opium sales are constantly on the increase in Laos, moreover, and it is probable that receipts for 1900 have reached nearly 350,000 francs.

5. BUDGET

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The budget of Laos was created by a decree of the governor general dated September 30, 1895. The first budget was that of 1896. It varies little from one year to another, and amounts to about two million francs. The following are the exact figures:

	francs
1896	1,819,245
1897	1,918,207
1898	2,008,806
1899	1,988,700
1900	1,847,500
1901	1,896,650

[506] Local receipts taken in in 1895 amounted to 356,925 francs. In 1900 they had risen to 516,250 francs, an increase of 159,325 francs. On the other hand, levies on the other parts of Indo-China which were necessary to balance the budget of Laos decreased by the same amount. In fact, since local resources are insufficient to cover expenses, it has been necessary to have recourses to subsidies provided by the other countries of the Indo-Chinese union. Thus Cochinchina provided 6/13 of the subsidy, Tonkin 5/13 and Cambodia 2/13. Since the creation of a general budget for Indo-China, the sum of these subsidies is entered there annually.

Each year a projected budget is prepared by the superior resident. It is presented to the Superior Council of Indo-China, which studies and approves it. Before it can become official, it must also be approved by the President of the Republic.

Here, as a sample, is the budget as established for the fiscal year 1900:

A. Receipts

	francs
Direct taxes.....	316,250
Miscellaneous taxes.....	200,000
Subsidy from general budget....	1,331,250
Total receipts....	1,847,500

249 It is reckoned that about 100 tobacco plants are needed to supply one "mun" of cut tobacco, and this would mean, in accordance with what has been said above, a yield of 1,800 to 3,000 kilograms per hectare.

[145]

APPENDIX XXIV
NOTE ON SERICULTURE

231 178 It would appear that sericulture was once one of the most active branches of the country's industry. It must even have been quite extensive, if we are to rely on the sayings of the older folk who deplore its present decline.

231 Today the production by this entirely familial breeding industry is not as great as it used to be and its quality leaves much to be desired, as does the general yield from the silkworms. This decline stems both from certain unfavorable climatic conditions and from a defective food supply for the worms resulting from the poor state of mulberry tree cultivation.

Since the temperature in places where there are silkworm breeding houses never falls below a certain point, except perhaps during a few nights in the cold season, there can be no wintering for the silkworms. As a consequence there is never any stop to the fecundation, egg-laying, incubation, hatching and rearing of the worms, and all these operations can be carried out continuously all year long.

Under such a regimen it is not surprising that the native varieties of silkworms should degenerate and produce only a mediocre and rather scanty yield. From the point of view of breeding returns, there are considerable losses. Thus if eight females lay 2,500 to 3,000 eggs, for example, these will yield only 250 or 300 worms and only half of the latter, that is to say about 125 or 150, will reach a final stage of development and spin a cocoon. This return amounts to only ten percent of the eggs placed in incubation and fifty percent of the worms subsequently hatched.

Fecundation and egg-laying. The male and female insects which have been selected and chosen for reproduction are mated for fecundation. Afterwards the females are separated from the males, which serve no further purpose, and placed in groups of six or eight on a small square of cottonstuff which is covered with an ordinary porcelain bowl. [146] The females lay their eggs, and when they have done so some 2,500 or 3,000 eggs are found on the

naturally be "water." These two elements, opposed though they are 593
to one another, nonetheless go together. If you should happen to 647
raise your voice, see to it that it does not reach the ears of your 565
neighbors who will be sure to laugh at your domestic misunderstanding.
There is a good way to appease your anger: that is to go out and get
some fresh air. A moment of distraction will calm your irritation.
This precious and effective remedy is called, according to a Laotian
expression, "to caress one's heart with a hand drenched with fresh
water."

On a walk and on a visit.--Formerly it used to be considered 574
a disgrace for a mandarin to go for a walk by himself or to visit minor 647
functionaries. Nowadays this is no longer the case. A Laotian 565
Minister goes out alone without being accompanied by the traditional 178
retinue. He visits all classes of society without being criticized for
it by anyone at all.

At a private gathering.--In contrast to the customs of former
times, present-day mandarins accept the invitation of a simple
citizen. The host very often organizes various diversions: dances, /533/
lamvong, orchestras, songs etc. The Ministers willingly participate /535/
in these; they sing, dance, and pay their respects to the phousaos
while they mingle with the crowd. Certain Laotians whom I consider
backward criticize the liberal manner on the part of our Ministers.
Our great mandarins are their own masters. Let them turn a deaf
ear to these carpings. /978/

Honor Laotian Women

Some people consider the Laotian woman as an inferior 562
creature.

Certain women, it appears, are not permitted to eat with
their husband. Miserable husbands! You consider then that your
better half is like an animal?

Certainly, tradition says: "The woman must sleep with her /513/
head lower than her husband's. She must go to bed after him and
she must get up before him. The husband must have eaten three /264/
mouthfuls of rice before the wife can begin to eat in her turn."

These counsels of our fathers are valuable, but they are far
from indicating that the woman is inferior to the man. They recommend,

779
538 treatises on metaphysics.

[188]
[179] Such is the whole of the Buddhist canon in force in Laos. Unfortunately, as the knowledge of Pali disappeared, many texts were forgotten because they were not understood and therefore were not followed. But certainly the most popular text and that which forms the core of all Buddhist literature is the Jatakam.

The Jatakas.

This name is given to a collection of tales about the former lives of the Buddha. As the Master is supposed to have had the greatest variety of experiences from the animal state to that of a god, going through the different states of humanity, his long career as bodhisattva provides ample material for stories of all sorts, moral tales, satirical tales, parables, fables, etc. These stories have no equivalent in any literature, for Buddha knows not only his own births, but also the former births of all creatures, and these he relates as the occasion presents itself. The method of exposition is always the same. The narrator tells more or less briefly the circumstances giving rise to the story of the Buddha, then comes the story itself, finally by way of conclusion, the Buddha relates the past to the present by indicating the identity of the characters in their various roles.

The greatest number of Jatakas take place at the time when "Brahmadatta reigned in Benares," which is the equivalent of our "once upon a time."

In these tales the Buddha appears in the most varied roles; he is in turn ascetic, king, scholar, courtier, brahman, prince, noble, merchant, landlord, slave, potter, elephant-driver, woodcutter, mason, thief, actor, student, etc. Sometimes he is a god or the deity [28] a tree, sometimes merely an animal, such as a serpent, a lizard, a bull, a pig, a dog, etc. The Buddha has none of the prejudices of nobility. Instead he gives a comforting example of how in all ranks of creation one can realize perfection in oneself and serve the collective interests of the universe. The most incongruous materials are harmoniously blended in this incoherent collection which is always frank. The whole Indian folklore is poured into this convenient framework, where it has received the Buddhist stamp, and been spread throughout the whole Far East where it has been received with enthusiasm.

There are 547 Jatakas. Some are more popular than others. Thus, in Laos, there are ten which form a special collection called "Sip Xat" (the ten Jatakas). The best known are the Temiya Jataka: (Cf. Appendix: Luang Prabang).

inverting the order of words. The negation bo is added. Is the gentleman home? is translated Tan you ban bo? Sometimes a single word contains a whole phrase:

mi = there are.
dai = it is possible.

Vocabulary. In addition to the pronunciation of sounds, one of the difficulties of the Laotian language is the distinction between noble language and popular language. The language is different when one addresses the bonzes, the high dignitaries, the king. There is a very rich concrete and abstract Laotian vocabulary which unfortunately is tending to go out of use. We have found in manuscripts Laotian words translating textually [78] abstract Pali words, but they have been gradually forgotten. The Laotians no longer read enough of their original texts. Cheap Siamese literature has invaded the country making the people abandon their own language.

One of the urgent tasks is to bring back the old Laotian texts into honor and to spread them abroad again among the public.

[79] LITERATURE AND MUSIC

In addition to the canonical religious literature already discussed, Laos possesses an important literary treasury. But as in Cambodia, Siam and Burma, this literature is anonymous. We are in the presence of epic texts of Indian origin, of legendary traditions, of apologues, of legal, moral or comic tales. There exist also novels, but as in French "romances" of the Middle Ages, they are by unknown authors. There is no equivalent in Laos of a Kalidasa or of a Li T'ai-po. No philosopher or dramatic author is known.

If the name of a French writer were mentioned whose manner is closest to that of Laotian authors, it would be that of Charles Perrault, and this in a word characterizes the type of Laotian literature. It excels in wonderful tales.

Literature of Indian Inspiration.

In addition to the Jatakas, Laos possesses at least two great texts of Indian origin. This is said under reservation of further discoveries, for in spite of the important work of Louis Finot, "Recherches sur la littérature laotienne," we are still far from knowing all the treasures of the Laos pagodas.

a) The Pancatantra. The first text is a collection of tales copied from the famous Indian Pancatantra. In the Middle Ages

536 There is no scenery. The costumes and headdresses vary according to the characters represented. The masks of colored lacquer worn by the actors, their accessories (weapons, scarves, etc.) being traditional and invariable enable the fictitious characters on the stage to be identified.

/178 The theatre of animated shadows, similar to the shadow theatre
101/ of China and Java, tends to disappear little by little.

Laotian Decoration.

Laotian decoration is characterized by a somewhat mannered
531 elegance which can be noticed in the motifs of the pagoda doors and
178 windows. The Laotian artisan is, however, endowed with an extremely well developed artistic sense, but the present day demands do not enable him any longer to live by his handiwork, and the importation of manufactured articles tends to make the artist disappear. /89/ He can only survive by royal patronage. The royal palace for this reason shelters sculptors on wood and ivory as well as goldsmiths, but
/644/ their produce is not sold and the tourist will hardly be able to bring back with him typical Laotian objects.

However, the weaving of silk materials of divers shades, often laminated with gold or silver, is still done on a sufficient scale to
/236/ satisfy the passing tourist.

The Sin

This is a skirt reaching from the hips to the ankles. It is of a
291 rather somber color with a design of vertical stripes very close together and not very evident. This skirt is decorated on its lower edge with a flat trimming of two or three rows of gold or silver braid. At the top of the skirt a belt of red cloth, more or less embroidered, relieves the rather dark tone. This garment is a regular cylinder having the same width on its entire length. When the woman emerges from her bath she lifts her skirt, gathered into the shape of a crown, above her head and lets it slide down the length of her body. She fixes it without hooks or fasteners to her belt by means of a turned in pleat tied in front leaving most of her belly exposed. A bright colored scarf of cotton or silk thrown over one shoulder and completely covering the breasts completes the costume. The most beautiful scarves come from Samneua, Luang Prabang and Khong. The jewelry most frequently seen consists of
301 silver bracelets, necklaces and buttons, rings, long crossed over chains /chaînes-sautoirs/, flat clasps, and belts usually of silver but sometimes of gold.

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